

Recycling FAQs



Get answers to your most frequently asked recycling questions!

Why should I recycle?

This directory's title says it best: **Recycle Today for a Better Tomorrow!** Recycling is one of the best ways you can contribute to a sustainable future. Throwing away an item that can be recycled is a waste. **Recycling has both local and global benefits.** Locally, it saves our limited disposal capacity by reducing how much garbage we have to bury in our landfill. Globally, recycling reduces pollution, and conserves energy and natural resources.

Can recycling help the economy?

Yes. Recycling can create jobs, cut business costs (for disposal), and reduce our dependence on foreign resources. For example, manufacturing aluminum beverage cans from recycled cans reduces the need to import bauxite ore (and takes 95% less energy!).

How can I start recycling?

Use this directory! See pages 6-13 to [find out how to recycle items such as cans, bottles, and paper.](#)

Can I recycle more than cans, bottles, and paper?

Yes. **For additional recycling opportunities:** see page 18 for our [online guide listing over 250 items](#), page 19 for [hazardous chemicals and electronics](#), page 20 for [used motor oil](#), and page 21 for [business programs](#).

Why isn't there just one recycling program?

Each city selects its own program which means there are 25 different recycling programs in Pinellas County (one for each city plus the program for unincorporated areas). This guide is provided to make recycling easy for you. See pages 6-13 to [find out what can be recycled in your area.](#)

How much do we recycle?

Currently, Pinellas County has a **recycling rate of about 30%.**



- 1 - Paper (26%)
- 2 - Food (12%)
- 3 - Bottles & cans (11%)
- 4 - Construction debris (9%)
- 5 - Yard waste (7%)
- 6 - Electronics & chemicals (5%)
- 7 - Clothing & fabric (4%)
- 8 - Metals (2%)
- 9 - Items not easily recycled such as dirty diapers or tissues (24%)

Based on 2007 waste composition data for solid waste disposed at Bridgewater Acres.

Do we have a recycling goal?

Yes. In the 2008 Energy Bill (House Bill 7135), Florida's legislature proposed a [new statewide goal to recycle 75% by 2020.](#) We will need to work hard to achieve this goal. You can start by looking at how much of your garbage could be recycled (see graphic at left). We encourage you to recycle not only at home, but also at work, school, and other areas of your busy life. **Your efforts can truly make a difference!**

Are there recycling options for apartments, condos, or businesses?

Yes. To find out what options are available, visit pinellascounty.org/recycle. Also, see page 21 for information on business waste reduction and recycling.

Where can I learn about the benefits of recycling?

Learn more about environmental, economic, and community benefits of recycling at the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) site: www.epa.gov/region4/recycle.

What does the recycle logo mean?

The three "chasing arrows" in the recycle logo symbolize the three stages of recycling:



- **Collect** - Recyclables such as cans or bottles are collected.
- **Process** - Materials are processed (recycled) into new products.
- **Buy** - Consumers buy the recycled products.

Recycling is a continuous cycle that recovers usable materials from consumers and returns them to the manufacturing stage, where they

replace raw natural resources. By recycling, you reduce the need to cut trees and extract minerals from the earth to make the things we use every day.

What does "close the loop" mean?

When you buy a recycled product, you "close the loop" by completing the recycling process. You can help even more by choosing products made with "post-consumer" recycled materials. This means the manufacturer used materials that were recycled by someone like you!

What recycled products are available?

There are many recycled products available. Paper products with recycled content—such as facial tissue, paper towels, copy paper, and food packaging—are readily available locally. Also look for recycled carpet, mulch, or decking. Read package labels, or ask a store manager for help. The same way you scan a label for calories, you can check for recycled content. Look for the recycle logo and words such as "35% post-consumer content".



Scan labels for recycled content.

What does post-consumer content mean?

- **Post-consumer content** means a product has been used by a consumer (such as yesterday's newspaper) and collected to be recycled.
- **Pre-consumer content** consists of factory trimmings (such as paper scraps at a paper mill) which are routinely recycled. Look for post-consumer recycled materials whenever possible.

New Curbside Recycling Program

Is a countywide curbside recycling program planned?

Yes. The **Board of County Commissioners approved a plan to provide curbside recycling in unincorporated areas**, and to help fund curbside programs in all of the cities.

Why provide a curbside recycling program?

The primary motivation is to **conserve our limited landfill space.** Local curbside recycling programs recover more than five times as much material per capita as local drop-off programs. In addition to conserving natural

resources, curbside recycling provides a net reduction in pollution through reduced mining, processing, and manufacturing, as compared to the operation of collection vehicles.

When will the countywide curbside recycling program begin?

We plan to have a countywide program in place by early 2010.



What plastic items can be recycled in Pinellas County?

Most municipal recycling programs in Pinellas County accept **plastic bottles.** This includes empty bottles used for soda, milk, water, syrup, shampoo, ketchup, etc.

Can I recycle plastic items other than bottles?

Yes. See our [A to Z Guide](#) (found at the Web address listed below) for **ways to recycle other plastic items** such as #3-7 containers, newspaper sleeves, egg cartons, produce trays, styrofoam packing peanuts, grocery bags, and plant pots.

Do any recycling programs accept glass?

Yes. There are [12 cities that accept glass in their curbside recycling programs](#) (see pages 6-13), plus [23 drop-off sites available](#) (see bottom left of page 4).

What's the difference between curbside and drop-off recycling programs?

- In a **curbside recycling program**, recyclable materials (such as newspapers) are placed in a special container at the curb for pickup by a recycling truck.
- A **drop-off recycling program** provides a center where citizens can transport (drop off) their recyclable materials.

What if I have other questions about recycling?

Find **answers to other frequently asked recycling questions** and the most up-to-date information about our recycling programs at pinellascounty.org/recycle or use the information below to contact us.



Visit our Web site for answers to **60 FAQs about recycling!**